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NDI POLL: GEORGIANS STRONGLY SUPPORT EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND LOOK FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMY IN THE POST-LOCAL ELECTION PERIOD

TBILISI – A survey of public opinion in Georgia released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) shows that nearly 60 percent of Georgians believe the country should join the European Union (EU) rather than the Eurasian Customs Union and are highly supportive (78 percent) of the Georgian government’s stated goal to join the EU.

A significant number of Georgians, 79 percent, are aware that Georgia signed an association agreement with the EU on June 27. Sixty-nine percent of respondents approve of this development, with 8 percent disapproving and 22 percent with no opinion.

Employment and the economy continue to be among the most pressing issues, with 63 percent citing jobs and 32 percent citing poverty as their priority issues.

Regarding the elections, 74 percent believe that local government elections were well conducted. Sixty-three percent of Georgians disapprove of a senior religious figure calling upon citizens to vote against a specific party. Forty-four percent approve of the Central Election Commission’s (CEC) request that the bishop in question clarify his remarks. Ultimately, 73 percent believe that the church should not be engaged in election campaigning.

“Georgians’ support for EU membership and Euro-Atlantic integration remains strong. In relation to domestic issues, while local government elections were viewed as being well conducted, progress on improving the economy is seen as slow,” said NDI Interim Country Director Kristina Wilfore. “Georgians have consistently said that jobs and poverty are the most important national issues facing the country. Government representatives who use this information will find support among Georgian citizens.”

The survey looks at issues of public importance, perceptions of democracy and attitudes toward reforms, as well as various domestic and foreign policy issues. The results reflect data collected from July 23 through Aug. 7 in face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgian speakers that included 3,338 completed interviews. The survey has an average margin of error of +/-2.9%.

NDI’s survey work is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and carried out by CRRC-Georgia.

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